

DIVISION: FORMS 1 - 4
AGE GROUP: 12 years plus
SERIES: CURRENT AFFAIRS
PROGRAMME (9) "The Dissolution of the House"
RECORDING:
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NARR: Hello boys and girls,

In today's programme, let's have a look at the way Guyana is being governed at the moment. At the moment there is no House of Assembly. You know what the Assembly is, don't you? Yes it is the body of men and women elected as Representatives of the people in 1961. In the Assembly all the new laws of the country were discussed and then if they had more people for them than against them they were approved.

The Assembly was the place where the ~~Premier~~, the ^{members of the} ~~Government~~ ^{sat} Hon'ble Dr. Cheddi Jagan had a seat. And in the Assembly too sat ~~Mr. L.F.S. Burnham, the leader of the People's National Congress.~~ ^{sat the members of the two Opposition Parties} Also in the Assembly sat Mr. Peter D'Aguiar - ~~the leader of the United Force.~~ ^{who in} These two parties, as you know were called the Opposition - that they were the Parties, opposed to the Party which runs the Government and they sat opposite to the Members of that Party - the ~~People's Progressive Party in the Assembly.~~ It was in the Assembly that most of the really interesting debates took place. You know what a debate is, don't you? It is an argument in which there are special rules which tell you who should speak first, who speak second and so on, and also when you can reply to what your opponents have said.

/Well in the.....

Well in the Assembly there were many debates over all sorts of matters like the Budget, and the University, *for instance*

And people who wanted to hear these debates would sometimes go and sit in a special place called the Visitors Gallery. Perhaps when you are older you will be very interested to go and hear these debates.

But, boys and girls, the Assembly was not the only place where debates and discussions took place. There was another body called the Senate. Now when a law was approved in the Assembly - that is when more people voted for it than against it - the Senate then began to debate the same law to see whether they too would approve of it. But there was a big difference between the Assembly and the Senate. I wonder if you could tell me what it was? Well you see the members of the Assembly were elected but the members of the Senate were nominated - that is - they were selected to sit there by the leader of the Government, the leaders of the Opposition Parties and by the Governor. The Senate was not as powerful a body as the Assembly but it gave the Parties a chance to bring people they wanted into the governing of the country - even if these people didn't go up for elections.

But now there is no more Senate nor Assembly. They have been dissolved - that means that the Governor has decided that they must no longer meet. But why? Well just before an election takes place it is the custom to dissolve the Assembly and the Senate. And the reason is that the members of the Assembly need time to campaign - you know what that means, don't you - it means time to go around speaking at

/street corners and.....

street corners and in open places to persuade people to vote for them. Some of them have to travel up and down the country - and so they would be away from the Assembly if it were still meeting. But there is another reason. There would be very little business to discuss in the Assembly anyway. Everybody is waiting to see who will win the elections before they think of making new laws, new budgets and so on. So there is very little to do in the Assembly. But wait does this mean that there is no Government at all? Oh no. We haven't yet mentioned one part of the Government which works along with the Assembly and the Senate. That is the Council of Ministers. Now the council of Ministers is made up only of members of the Government Party. Their job is to apply the laws the Assembly passes - to put them into practice. You can say the Assembly passes the laws and the Council of Ministers makes them work. Now this body remains to run the country. And you know, boys and girls, it does not go out of power until after the Elections. When the election results are known, if a new Party wins it will make a new Council of Ministers. But even if the same Party wins it still has to make a new council for often it wants to bring in new men to be Ministers.

But what about the Governor? He still has a lot to do. He is still in charge of defence and foreign affairs - and since the Emergency was declared he was given wide powers to make decisions whenever he thinks it will make for peace - and he need not ask for permission from the council of Ministers, it seems.

/So you, see, boys.....

So you see boys and girls, the Government of the country still goes on. And soon - after December 7th there will be a new Assembly where once again the Debates and arguments will go on.

Perhaps you will soon want to go to watch and listen to these debates. It will be good for you, since you will begin to have a good idea of how countries are run.

So long then, until next week.

OPRL

PLAY THEME: